

growth in western Oregon and Washington than there was a decade ago.

However, the sharpest decline in spotted owl populations actually occurred where the least amount of federal timber harvest took place namely the Olympic Peninsula of Washington State. This is also the location of the greatest number of barred owls.

The spotted owl actually increased its population in southern Oregon—where the most federal harvest activity took place, and had the smallest incidence of barred owl invasion.

One thing is for certain—the future of the spotted owl is not only affected by the teeth of chainsaws, but in the bloody talon of the barred owl.

And there is a third twist. Forest fires are decimating spotted owl habitat. Over 100,000 acres of spotted owl habitat was severely burned over the last 10 years. Now, we don't clear-cut for human use, we just burn it all in wildfires.

This is the Biscuit Fire, the largest fire in Oregon's history, the most expensive to fight in Forest Service history, costing in excess of \$150 million. Shoot, folks, with \$150 million we could take care of all the problems I am talking about with Oregon counties. The Biscuit Fire incinerated 65,000 acres of the spotted owl habitat as seen in this picture. This is more than four times the amount affected by timber sales in the 50 years preceding the fire. One notable difference is that areas harvested were replanted.

So after 15 years of not logging old growth, growing new growth, and burning "protected" old growth, the Federal Government doesn't know what to do for the spotted owl. After 15 years since its listing under the ESA, the Federal Government does not even have a recovery plan for the spotted owl. And now we are hearing from the Federal Government it doesn't have much of a plan for the people whose lives were ruined.

As I stand here today, it is also clear that the Federal Government doesn't know what to do with these communities in the wake of its failed management decisions.

Let me also mention a fourth impact. This should be of particular interest to those Members concerned about the outsourcing of U.S. jobs and industries to other countries. As wood production fell on the Federal timberlands, it was replaced—board foot by board foot—by the Canadian Government in its "Crown Lands." Does anyone think the spotted owl knows the difference between the United States and Canadian borders? I don't think they know. But what we are doing now is not harvesting our land. What we are doing now is burning our land, and the Canadians are overcutting their lands.

This trend is mirrored in reverse by the blue line on this chart, showing Canadian lumber imports into this country.

The green and blue lines diverge in 1990—the years the spotted owl was

listed as threatened. The flood of Canadian imports met the ever-growing U.S. demand for lumber.

So instead of milling our lumber, harvested from our own forests, with our own environmental laws, we are exporting the impact and the jobs to other countries—other countries with fewer environmental protections and where forests regenerate more slowly.

For a further example of the outsourcing of our lumber industry, go to Hurricane Katrina in 2005. With western timber locked up in court, southern timber blown down in the storm, the administration actually floated the idea of lowering tariffs on foreign imported lumber for the Katrina rebuilding effort.

Needless to say, that concept did not move far. Plenty of lumber was reproduced for the reconstruction. Much of it was salvaged, probably from Mississippi and Louisiana.

The point here is that actions have consequences. If the United States wants to consume wood, and it should, then it needs to recognize where wood comes from. But if Americans don't want wood to come from American forests, harvested under the strictest environmental guidelines in the world, then let's face that reality. But the reality has consequences.

I wonder if I can ask for an additional 15 minutes and that will be all I will require.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WHITEHOUSE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SMITH. I thank the Senator from Vermont for listening to me. I have detailed for you the dramatic story of the Federal timber in Oregon that serves as the backdrop for the issue at hand.

Beginning in the late 1980s, timber sales received the primary funding source for the 25 Percent Fund and began a precipitous decline for the reasons I have explained earlier. This plunge in receipts intensified and then bottomed out at a much lower level in the 1990s. The decline in receipts impacted rural communities in the West, particularly communities in Washington, Oregon, northern California, and Idaho.

For example, in fiscal year 1995, national forest revenues were \$557 million, only 36 percent of fiscal year 1989 peak revenues of \$1.531 billion. In fiscal year 2004 national forest revenues were \$281 million. That is from "billions" to "millions."

Payments to many States under the 25 Percent Fund Act declined by an average of 70 percent from 1986 through 1998. These are national figures. Those in Oregon were far more severe, reflecting the drastic fall in the timber sales program.

The problem was compounded because 18 Oregon counties have different revenue-sharing agreements with the Bureau of Land Management.

Mr. SANDERS. I ask the Senator to yield so I can do some housekeeping.

Mr. SMITH. If I don't lose my place.

## ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

### HONORING JOE AND DEE SPORTS

• Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, today I honor two wonderful Georgians, Joe and Dee Sports of Conyers, as they celebrate 50 years of marriage.

Joe and Dee both grew up in south Georgia. Joe is a native of Douglas in Coffee County, and the former Dee Plymell hails from Thomasville. They are blessed with one daughter, Susan, and two grandsons, Ali Joseph and Amir Elias.

Joe has worn many hats over the years in Georgia and Washington including political leader, newspaper and television reporter, congressional aide and public affairs consultant. He was executive director of the Democratic Party of Georgia during the administrations of 2 Governors and served as a congressional aide to U.S. Senator David Gambrell as well as four Georgia congressmen. He began his governmental affairs firm, Joe Sports & Associates, over 25 years ago. He also edits Georgia Beat, Georgia's oldest political newsletter.

Dee is retired from the Georgia Secretary of State's office after many years of distinguished service. She now enjoys helping to raise her grandsons, who live close by with their mom.

On February 24, Joe and Dee will gather together with their family and friends to celebrate this truly momentous occasion. Although I cannot be there in person, it is a privilege to stand in this Senate and honor this tremendous milestone that embodies the profound love and commitment they have for one another. Their marriage is an inspiration to us all. •

### WE THE PEOPLE NATIONAL FINALS

• Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, from April 28–30, 2007, more than 1,200 students from across the country will visit Washington, DC, to take part in the national finals of We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution, an important program developed to educate young people about the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. The We the People program is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and administered by the Center for Civics Education.

I am proud to announce that the State of New Mexico will be represented by a class from Highland High School from Albuquerque at this prestigious national event. These outstanding students, through their knowledge of the U.S. Constitution, won their statewide competition and earned the chance to come to our Nation's Capital and compete at the national level.

While in Washington, the students will participate in a 3-day academic